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PARLIAMENTARY ANECDOTES OF SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

By WILLIAM SIDEBOTHAM.

THE popular estimate of living statesmen is generally formed from the reports of their speeches which appear in the public press. Even in the case of those eminent politicians who have been honoured with biographies during their lifetime, such histories have invariably dealt only with public action and conduct, and throw little light on what has been said and done in the more secluded paths of life. This is partly due to the lack of anecdotal power in the mental constitution of our statesmen, many of whom have not the gift of clothing an ordinary incident in that dramatic form of expression which converts it into an anecdote. They, so to speak, lack the eye for the picturesque in individual life; and the resources of their experience have not been sufficiently rich and varied to supply incidents within their own knowledge to point a moral or to adorn a speech. The statesman who possessed this gift in the highest degree was undoubtedly Mr Gladstone; but Sir William Harcourt, his chief lieutenant in the House of Commons during the two last decades of that leader's political life, is not so deficient in this faculty as is generally supposed.

When Sir William Harcourt came prominently before the British public as a political orator, nearly a quarter of a century ago, his speeches were remarkable for their humour—a quality which he seems to have almost exhausted; but it was the humour of a caustic mind, which poured amusing ridicule upon whatever he was opposed to, not the humour of ordinary or of personal incident. Hence the anecdotes which can be recorded of him, although not numerous, throw much light on his political character, and are of greater interest on account of the conspicuous part he has taken in the science of government.

Emerging into the blaze of public life owing

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to the brilliancy and humour of his earlier speeches, Sir William Harcourt has latterly distinguished himself as a critic of affairs ecclesiastical; and as such his writings and speeches have been sombre rather than entertaining. His career as an ecclesiastical politician began in connection with an incident which attracted considerable attention at the time, and is still of public interest, because of the duel that took place between him and Mr Gladstone, and the prediction of the Liberal leader respecting Sir William Harcourt at the close of the debate.

Towards the end of the session of 1874, when the Public Worship Regulation Bill came before the House of Commons, Mr Gladstone delivered a vigorous and animated speech against it. Sir William Harcourt, who had been Solicitor-General in Mr Gladstone's administration in the previous year, speaking in defence of the bill, remarked—in the presence of a full House, during the course of a debate which commanded the attention of the whole nation—that they had all been under the wand of 'the enchanter,' and had listened with rapt attention as he had 'poured forth the wealth of his incomparable eloquence.' Then Sir William added: 'As I listened with that admiration which we all share to the magnificent oration, I asked myself how the principles so enunciated can be reconciled with the principle upon which the National Church was founded.' Everything seemed to contribute to give prominence to this debate, and the following incident, though in itself comical, heightened the public interest. After Sir William Harcourt had concluded his speech, Mr Gathorne Hardy (now Lord Cranbrook) rose from the Government bench, and was proceeding to speak in defence of the bill, when an unexpected peal of laughter was heard. This was caused by the appearance of a large tabby cat, which was observed descending the Opposition gangway. In a moment the animal

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became the cynosure of all eyes, and the excitement caused by the debate immediately gave place to unbounded merriment. The cat proceeded to walk in a stately manner across the floor of the House; but, evidently becoming frightened by the resounding mirth, the 'distinguished stranger' made a sudden spring over the shoulders of the members sitting on the front Ministerial bench below the gangway, and amid shouts of excitement bounded over the heads of members to the back benches until it reached the side door, when it disappeared. This sudden appearance of the cat, its more sudden departure, and the astonishment of members when it vaulted so close to their faces and beards, almost convulsed the House. Mr Gathorne Hardy, who was a man of resource in debate and apt in quotation, resumed his speech—which had been brought to a sudden termination by the antics of the animal—and said, amid much laughter, that Foxe in his *Book of Martyrs* related that the Synod of Dort was disturbed by the sudden appearance of an owl; and he was not surprised that the House was startled by the appearance of an animal which was certainly not regular in its attendance in the House.

The present House of Commons, after the lapse of a little over a quarter of a century, contains only about a dozen members who were present to hear that debate, which is still memorable on account of what Mr Gladstone said in reference to Sir William Harcourt at the close of the discussion. The latter renewed his refutation of Mr Gladstone's first attack on the bill on 5th August, and Sir William's speech on that occasion is noteworthy because of the following declaration: 'This,' he said, 'is not and never has been a very strong bill, and I fear that we shall commit an unstatesmanlike act in passing a small measure on a great subject. This matter—I do not say this bill—is far the largest business which has occupied parliament or the public mind in my lifetime. I always believed that this bill would break down upon the discretion of the Bishops, and I believe now that it will break down upon that point.' Mr Gladstone's final reply was mostly occupied with retorts on Sir William Harcourt. The latter, he said, 'has not yet sown his parliamentary wild-oats. After he has, I have not the slightest doubt he will combine with his ability—which no one sees with greater satisfaction than I do—temper and wisdom, and a due consideration for the feelings of others; strictness in restating arguments, the arguments of opponents; in fact, every political virtue that can distinguish a notability of parliament; and, if he persists in the course of study he has begun, a complete knowledge of ecclesiastical law.' The House received this chastened compliment with mingled feelings, and without too nicely discriminating whether it was sarcasm or commendation. This passage may now be read as a prediction rather than sarcasm.

In the present year, when the military resources of the Empire are being put to the test by the campaign in South Africa, it may be interesting to recall an incident which occurred in 1885, when the 'shadow of war' threatened our power in the Far East. In that year an encounter took place between some Russian and Afghan troops on the border of Afghanistan—an incident which was subsequently explained away as not being intended to alarm the people of England as to the aggressive intentions of Russia upon our Indian Empire; but the Liberal Government took the matter so much to heart, thereby reflecting the general sentiments of the English people, that they proposed a vote of credit for eleven millions sterling to prepare for war with Russia. When the question of making the necessary preparations began to be seriously discussed by the Government, the present Duke of Devonshire—then the Marquis of Hartington, who occupied the position of Secretary of State for War—asked Sir William Harcourt, the then Home Secretary, how many troops he would require to maintain order in the United Kingdom, so that he might know what would be the force available in the event of war with Russia. Sir William, whose mind, like that of Mr Gladstone, was understood to be much exercised at the time with the burning question of the government of Ireland, replied: 'If you will answer for the peace of Ireland, I will undertake to maintain order in England and Scotland without the aid of a single soldier.' The war in South Africa is the first one of any magnitude in which we have been involved since that discussion took place between these two statesmen; and the spontaneous enthusiasm of the British public in answering the call to arms gives additional pregnancy to Sir William Harcourt's reply.

Talking about South Africa reminds me of an incident which took place when, on the retirement of Mr Gladstone, Sir William became leader of the House of Commons. He was asked, shortly after the death of Lord Tennyson, when the Government intended to appoint another Poet-Laureate, and he remarked that he was content to reply in the words of the Roman poet: *Poeta nascitur, non fit*. Soon afterwards the Conservative party came into power, and a Poet-Laureate was appointed. Sir William Harcourt has on more than one occasion indicated his feelings in regard to that appointment. In the course of the first speech he delivered in the House of Commons after the Jameson Raid, he deprecated what he termed the vainglorious spirit in which the courage of those who had taken part in that movement had been applauded, remarking that that regrettable tone should be left to music-hall singers and Poet-Laureates. When Mr A. J. Balfour (who is a personal friend of Mr Austin, and who is understood to have had a good deal to do with the latter's appointment to the position of Poet-

Laureate) heard that observation his face fell, showing that the pleasantries had had its effect. Later on, when the circumstances of the Jameson Raid were investigated before a Select Committee, Sir William took a prominent part in the examination of the principal witnesses, and his legal acumen and subtle interrogations surprised even his most intimate friends. The searching questions he put to the witnesses who had been directly connected with the Raid, and also to those who had been in communication with the Reform leaders shortly before it took place, will long remain in the memory of those who were privileged to be present at what was *de facto*—although only designated by the name of a Select Committee—the greatest State trial since Warren Hastings was impeached. Much interest was aroused in the course of the proceedings in regard to a letter which was alleged to have been sent by the Reform leaders at Johannesburg to Dr Jameson, asking him to cross the border with the Chartered Company's troops which were under his control, in order to protect the women and children, who were represented to be in a position of great danger, owing to the threatening attitude of the Boer Government. This letter, it subsequently transpired, was in Dr Jameson's possession some time previously, to be used by him as the pretext for invading the Transvaal when things were ripe for the insurrection. Mr Rhodes also had a copy of the letter; and as soon as it was ascertained that Dr Jameson had entered the territory of the South African Republic, Mr Rhodes telegraphed it to Miss Flora Shaw, a correspondent of the *Times*, in order that it might be published in that journal. When Miss Shaw was called to give evidence a good many questions were put to her in reference to this letter, and Sir William Harcourt pressed her with the object of ascertaining whether she really believed it to be genuine. The witness replied, 'I believed it entirely;' whereupon Sir William dryly observed, 'You believed it in common with the Poet-Laureate'—a remark which caused considerable amusement, as it was felt to be another sly hit at Mr Balfour and Mr Austin.

Sir William Harcourt has repeatedly referred to the experience he gained while holding the office of Home Secretary as having modified some of his views on social and economic questions. On one occasion he told the House that shortly after he became the head of the Home Department a case was brought before him in which a man who had been convicted of crime and sentenced to penal servitude was subsequently stated to be innocent. The representations made so impressed the Home Secretary that he caused investigations to be made, which resulted in proving the innocence of the man, who had been in prison for some time. Sir William added that further inquiry showed that on a previous occasion the same individual had been convicted and sent to prison for another offence of which he was eventually proved to be

blameless. It thus appeared that this man had twice received Her Majesty's pardon for crimes he had been charged with but had not committed. Sir William impressed the House with the fact that, notwithstanding the ability and care which English judges brought to bear on the cases that came before them, serious mistakes sometimes occurred, requiring careful revision by the Home Office.

It is not generally known that Sir William Harcourt has varied tastes and has extensive knowledge of subjects other than politics. He takes a keen interest in landscape gardening; and although he does not, like Mr Chamberlain, make a practice of wearing a flower in his button-hole, he personally superintends the arrangement and management of his garden. He also takes an interest in art; and in this connection he once amused the House by telling an incident which he seemed to regard as instructive. Some years ago he was present in Christy's salerooms—the finest of the kind in London—inspecting a collection of pictures which were on view, and was much impressed by the portrait of the first Whig prime-minister of England, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. After examining the picture, Sir William asked an expert who was with him what it would be likely to realise, and was told that if it had been the portrait of an unknown lady it would probably sell for four thousand or five thousand pounds, female portraits by the great artist being always in much request; but as it was that of a prime-minister whose name was familiar, it would probably not fetch more than six hundred or seven hundred pounds. Sir William was at the time leader of the House of Commons, and was then looked upon as the political successor of Mr Gladstone. The House enjoyed the irony of the story, especially the leading members of the Opposition. Sir William joined in the merriment; and when an Opposition member asked across the table what was the sum the picture sold for, the First Lord of the Treasury replied, with a smile, 'Six hundred and fifty pounds,' and added that the incident showed that there was no standard value whereby property could be judged on its merits for purposes of probate-duty. In this connection he has been heard to state that in his earlier years, while travelling in the Highlands with Lord John Russell and other friends, they were one day crossing a Scotch loch; and in course of some conversation with a boatman, from whom they were trying to elicit information as to his views on the beauty of the surrounding landscape, the man assured them that the water of the loch had a special value. When asked to explain what it was, he remarked that it had the reputation of making the finest toddy in Scotland.

Sir William Harcourt has repeatedly expressed the admiration he felt in earlier years for sojourns in the Highlands. Over twenty years ago it was

his favourite holiday haunt, and sometimes he has drawn apt similes from his knowledge of Highland life and manners. About a dozen years ago the House of Commons was discussing the action of Irish resident magistrates, and it was alleged that they would do whatever the Government required of them. Sir William also took part in the debate, and in referring to this point declared that the Irish magistrate was like the Highland shepherd's collie, which could tell by a glance of its master's eye and without any word of command what it was required to do—an observation which immensely pleased the Irish Nationalists.

It is fairly well known that Sir William Harcourt's grandfather was Archbishop of York, and that his father was the Rev. William Vernon Harcourt, of Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, a canon of York. It is not, however, generally known that for several years in the eighties Sir William was one of the few members who had a brother a member of parliament—Colonel Harcourt. The latter, despite his physical resemblance to Sir William, differed from him both in habits and in tastes. He was a strong supporter of the Conservative party; and, although regular in his attendance at the House, he seldom delivered a speech. His military bearing and his reticence gave the impression that he was more at home in the camp than in the library. On one occasion, during a discussion in the House, a question was raised, as a by-point, on the influence of kinship upon politics; and Sir William caused some amusement, especially among the members of the Opposition, by stating with much gravity, from the Government bench, that his experience was that brothers did not always hold the same political opinions. When Colonel Harcourt died, the distinction of a minister having a brother on the opposite side of the House fell to Mr E. Stanhope, since deceased. It may be mentioned, in passing, that Sir William Harcourt has a son whose ability and knowledge are so marked that he is likely to maintain the commanding reputation of the family in State affairs for many years to come.

Sir William Harcourt's admiration for Mr Gladstone was unbounded, and he has frequently given expression to that feeling in public; and in this connection I remember an incident which struck me at the time as showing most significantly Sir William's appreciation of the deceased statesman. For some years after the Home Rule split Sir William delivered a number of speeches in the provinces attacking his personal friend and quondam colleague, Mr Chamberlain. Although these utterances, which were in his best swashbuckling style, caused considerable amusement, the public did not seem to be much impressed by his herculean efforts. His great chief, Mr Gladstone, took a different course, and no one seemed to appreciate his finesse more than Sir William. Mr

Gladstone only alluded to Mr Chamberlain on rare occasions, and then very briefly. In the course of an animated debate in the House of Commons one evening, Mr Chamberlain delivered a speech from the front Opposition bench in which he strongly defended the policy and attitude of the Liberal Unionists. Mr Gladstone, who was sitting on the same bench, listened attentively to Mr Chamberlain's observations. When his former colleague had resumed his seat he instantly rose, and, taking the place just vacated, for about five minutes gently taunted Mr Chamberlain regarding his consistency on political questions, comparing his attitude then with what it was in former years. The great Commoner did this in such a mild and gentle way that there was a constant ripple of laughter among the rank and file of the Radical party; but it seemed to send Sir William Harcourt into paroxysms of delight. As he listened to the skilful and at the same time graceful performances of his leader his face beamed; but later he was unable to conceal his ecstasy, for his whole body seemed, as it were, to heave. He put his hand over his face, and next folded his arms over his breast, giving way at the same time to uncontrollable laughter. The House regarded this as one of Mr Gladstone's finest efforts of the kind; and what made it more remarkable was the fact that it was done on the spur of the moment. No artist could do justice to the varied expressions of the countenances of Mr Gladstone's colleagues.

About two years ago Mr Chamberlain made what in the House of Commons is regarded as an undignified remark, and as indicating a lack of argumentative resource—a rather uncommon occurrence for the Colonial Secretary. Although, when interrupted by rude observations, he can give a crushing retort, as some of the Irish members have found to their cost, he seldom deviates from the unwritten code of parliamentary etiquette. On the occasion referred to he taunted Sir William Harcourt by saying, 'We don't all find time to write out our speeches;' and as the passage occurred in a rather feeble reply it was the more remarkable. It is usual for members to deliver their speeches either quite extemporaneously or with the aid of a few notes; yet it is not considered any disparagement for even a leading politician to write out his speech, so long as it is strictly appropriate to the subject under discussion. The late Mr W. H. Smith, when occupying the position of leader of the House, seldom delivered an important speech which he had not first written out. Sir William Harcourt has stated that he is fond of controversy, and as a controversialist some of his most effective retorts have been extempore; but as a rule on great occasions he writes out his speeches, and never tries to conceal the fact that he has done so. In the earlier years of his parliamentary career it was his habit to prepare his speeches very carefully,

both for the House and the country ; but, whereas formerly he stuck very closely to his manuscript (although his audience did not know it), in later years whole pages have been disregarded, and he has inserted passages which in the quietness of his study he had not thought of. A quarter of a century ago some of his speeches were feats of memory as well as of political oratory. It is known to his intimate friends of that time that every phrase in the addresses he then delivered was the result of mature reflection ; and he has repeatedly, in addressing large public meetings, delivered speeches which he had almost word for word in manuscript in his pocket.

Sir William Harcourt always acted with the greatest loyalty to Mr Gladstone. He was the Rupert in debate, ever ready and resourceful in defending his revered chief from the violent attacks which were made upon him, especially

during the Home Rule controversy. Since Mr Gladstone's death, however, it is well known that his relations with his colleagues have become somewhat strained, owing to various causes ; and as a consequence his speeches, except on rare occasions, have lacked that fire which was a distinguishing characteristic of his earlier efforts. Nevertheless, it is universally admitted that he is still one of the most striking figures in parliament ; and if he decides to leave the political arena, as some prophesy he will at no distant date—and his irregular attendance at the House of Commons during the last session gives colour to the prognostication—his retirement would be regretted by the members of both political parties. A connecting-link with the past, which it would be impossible to replace, would thus be severed, and parliamentary oratory would lose one of its ablest exponents.

OUR LADY OF DELIVERANCE.

CHAPTER XXVI.—HIS EXCELLENCY CREATES A SENSATION.



LED the way to Macpherson's cabin and unlocked the door. Lepard lurched round as he always did, so that his back was turned towards us. But Vaurel took him by the shoulder, and rolled him over in

order to give the Governor a good view of his scowling face and sullen eyes.

'The hair on his face alters him considerably. But he is he,' he said.

'Colonel Lepard'—he touched the Colonel's shoulder with his finger-tips—'I arrest you in the name of the Republic you have betrayed. I will send for you.'

'We will not take him with us,' he said as we were leaving the room. 'It would only spoil madame's happiness at meeting her brother.'

'I think I ought perhaps to tell your Excellency that Gaston spent the evening before last on board here with us,' I said.

'What?' he cried again, as though doubting his ears.

'You see, Denise was absolutely pining for a sight of her brother, so we went ashore and brought him off, and he spent the evening with us.'

He threw back his head and laughed loud and long, and I wondered what Colonel Lepard thought he was laughing at.

'This is a ship of surprises,' he said at last. 'Have you anything else to tell me? I'd better have it all at once.'

'I can tell you one more thing. It may or may not surprise your Excellency. You want Colonel Lepard for—I don't know what you will call it exactly—but for putting away Gaston des Comptes. He is guilty of another crime—I won't

say a graver one. He murdered his accomplice, Captain Zuyler, in the woods at Cour-des-Comptes, by beating in his head with an iron bar. Vaurel witnessed it.'

'What a scoundrel he is !' said His Excellency. 'I can readily believe that of him. It is exactly what one would expect that kind of man to do if he thought the other was going to round on him.'

'That was it exactly. But there is Denise awaiting us in the boat.'

'Come along, Vaurel, *mon ami*,' said the Governor, catching his anxious eye. 'We shall want you on shore. Certainly, bring the dog too, if he won't eat any of my people.'

'You are a most amazing set of people on board that yacht,' he said to Denise as the launch carried us swiftly up the harbour ; 'if you were going to make a long stay here, I should be afraid you would turn the island upside down.'

'I am very thankful it has all come out right. I was sure it would, but I did not see how it was going to,' she said.

'And if it hadn't you would have helped it ; is it not so, cousin ?'

'I don't see how we could. We did our best, but the Colonel would not open his mouth.'

'And why would he not open his mouth ?'

'I suppose because he knew we so much wanted him to,' she said.

'I see. There is a good deal yet to be told evidently, M. Lamont.'

'You shall have the whole story whenever your Excellency says the word.'

'And, meanwhile, let me see. You brought Lepard out here on the yacht. You took Gaston

out to the yacht, and then returned him to his prison. Why on earth did you not exchange them, and carry Gaston away, leaving the other in his place?'

'Well, to tell the truth, that was Vaurel's idea of what we ought to do, and on the face of it, it wasn't a bad idea; but there was one difficulty.'

'And that was?'—

'Gaston. He would not hear of it.'

'Of course he wouldn't,' said Denise. 'I told you all so the moment I heard of it.'

'He wouldn't go?' said the Governor.

'He flatly refused, and was somewhat hurt that any one could have considered him capable of such a thing.'

'Well, well, there are not many like him. And he has stood it all these months. He is a brave boy.'

'You will let him go home with us in the yacht, Cousin Godefroi?' asked Denise.

'Assuredly! I am instructed to procure him passage back to France, and he could not go quicker or better than with you. Will you take the other one too?'

'Horrors, no! I never want to see him, or hear of him, or think of him again. Relieve us of him as soon as you can, I beg of you.'

'Will you send him home?' I asked.

'I shall cable for instructions from Sydney. Possibly they would sooner not have him back, and will instruct me to put him away here. They will be glad to hear we have got him safe. What are you going to do with that hundred thousand francs, Vaurel, *mon gars*?'

'I have not got it yet, Excellency,' said Vaurel, with a broad smile.

'But you shall have it, my friend, or my name's not De la Rocherelle. You wouldn't like to stop here and help me to keep my black sheep in their folds, would you?'

'No, Excellency, I thank you! I would sooner help some of the least black to get out. I have had enough of keeping prisoners, and I was in prison once myself—in Prussia, you know,' he added quickly—and I know what it feels like.'

We hardly knew Gaston when he met us on the veranda of the Governor's house. He was clipped and shaved, and dressed in a captain's uniform, which the Governor had borrowed from one of his aides, and he looked very different from the unkempt and roughly-clad prisoner of two nights before. But he was Denise's Gaston, and the greeting between them was from the depths of their hearts.

We sat and talked with great content on the Governor's veranda all the afternoon. We told His Excellency all our story, and he enjoyed it greatly; and whenever he thought of Gaston coolly spending his evening on the yacht he laughed heartily.

'When you tell your adventures I think you must suppress that part, for my sake,' he said, 'or they will be thinking at home that our discipline is somewhat lax—which, indeed, it is, but there is no need to rub the fact into them. It's quite bad enough for the poor devils to be here at all.'

Then the guests arrived—a colonel, a major, two or three captains, and several lieutenants, accompanied by their wives, so far as they were possessed of them. They could not quite make out how Gaston's sister had arrived on the scene so opportunely, and were puzzled at her cousinship to the Governor, which implied a similar relationship on Gaston's part, of which they had had no previous idea.

They praised the beauty of the yacht, spoke enthusiastically of the way the men rowed the gig, and were amazed when they learned that we had actually come all the way from France in that very small ship.

The ladies eyed Denise's frock with keen curiosity, and questioned her closely, but with perfect politeness, as to the latest Paris fashions. They said what a perfectly charming dog Boulot was, but did not offer to touch him; and the men looked somewhat askance at him, and said that his high breeding was very apparent. Boulot sat with his shoulders up in his ears, panted heavily, and snuffed the dust out of his nose so violently that they were in a state of perpetual uneasiness, under the impression that he was about to make an unprovoked attack upon them.

They all vied with one another in courteous congratulations to Gaston on his rehabilitation. They hoped he had not found his sojourn on the island over trying, and wished they were in his shoes, going back to Paris, to the warm heart of the mother-country. They sighed for Paris, for the Boulevards, the cafés, the theatres, the fashions, the scandals. Paris contained everything that made life worth living, and here were they withering amid the dust, and the heat, and the galvanised iron roofs, and the last year's fashions, and all the news months old.

'There might be half-a-dozen revolutions and we never hear a word of it,' said the gray little Major. 'I wonder if they've caught that rascal Lepard yet. We may not hear of it for months.'

'If ever they catch him at all,' said the Colonel. 'He is a very clever man in his way is Colonel Lepard, and he's not to be caught napping, if I know anything of his character.'

'You knew him, M. le Colonel?' asked one of the lieutenants ingratiatingly.

'I have fought beside him, and he was a very great fighter, but not a man to like—an awful bully with his men. How they did hate him!'

'Eh, bien! M. le Colonel,' said his Excel-

lency, 'for once we shall get ahead of Paris, and you shall have news for which Paris is hungering.'

There was an expectant silence round the table, and all their eyes were fixed on him.

'Monsieur Lepard is here,' he said impressively, and a thrill ran round the guests. 'M. Lamont has been so good as to bring him to us on his yacht, as a prisoner.'

They could hardly take it all in, and as for understanding it, that was quite out of the question; but, once they were sure it was not one of His Excellency's jokes, their tongues wagged furiously, the air being thick with expletives and exclamations, and they were very greatly excited, and very much elated at turning the tables on Paris for once.

His Excellency had so greatly enjoyed the ripple he had created that he tried again.

'Moreover,' he said, 'Monsieur Lepard has still another crime to answer for. Did any of you know Captain Zuyler?'

'He was in Algiers with me,' said the Major. 'He was killed by a lunatic down in Bretagne just the other day.'

'He was the accomplice of this Lepard,' said the Governor, 'and it was Lepard who killed him with his own hands. I have the witness here, and the proofs on the spot will be unanswerable, I understand.'

His Excellency had reason to be amply satisfied with the sensation he had produced, and for once the members of his staff had something to talk about beyond the narrow limits of their island life, and they swelled big whenever they remembered that Paris was all in the dark, and that this extraordinary news was so far theirs alone.

(To be continued.)

A QUESTION OF INDUSTRIAL SUPREMACY.

By JAMES BURNLEY, Author of *The Romance of Invention*, &c.



Great Britain's industrial supremacy past or passing? This is a question that perhaps can be better answered from without than from within, and more effectively from the United States, where I write this article, than from any other country; for it is in America that the greatest efforts are being made to supplant the British in the markets of the world.

Within the last twenty years the industrial condition in the States has been greatly changed. During that period the importation into the country of iron and steel, raw or manufactured, has fallen from fourteen million pounds to two million four hundred thousand pounds; while the exportation of these articles exactly reverses the story, showing an increase from two million four hundred thousand pounds to fourteen million pounds.

Twenty years ago many of the leading positions in American manufacturing concerns were held by Englishmen; to-day English manufacturers are engaging Americans to aid in the direction of their enterprises. An old established iron and coal company in the north of England, for example, recently advertised for a manager, and it was expressly stipulated that he must be an American. In South Africa, before the outbreak of the war with the Boers, there were hundreds of American engineers employed, many of whom had made fortunes. Some of Russia's largest industrial establishments are under the direction of Americans; and, as we know to our cost, Americans are daily securing important contracts not only in those foreign countries where hitherto English skill and enterprise have largely predominated, but in Great

Britain itself and her colonies, where, if the offers of competition were anything like equal, it is to be presumed that the British contractor would be granted the preference.

In all these instances it is clear that the Americans possess some controlling advantage over their European rivals, whom they no longer follow but lead in certain industries; and it is worth while attempting to solve the problem that this deduction involves. So far, probably, the advantage is of a special and limited rather than of a general character; but in industrial expansion, as in other things, the tendency is for that which is special to become general by natural process of development. The advantages, whatever they may be—whether in natural resources, economic superiority, machinery, skill, protective influences, management, conditions of labour, combination of capital, or what else—that have enabled Americans to wrest big contracts from native firms in regard to the installation of electricity, the building of bridges, the supply of locomotives, and other matters, will inevitably enable them to make further headway in quarters where British products and British skill have up to now held chief sway, unless our home establishments are maintained in a condition to offer successful competition at all points.

The industrial alarmist reads in these signs of American advancement the funeral knell of British supremacy; and in the States it is very generally believed that the progress of the last twenty years, which has served to bring American manufacturers abreast with foreign competition, will be continued at the same rate in the future, and that before long foreign markets will be completely conquered, giving America the

leading position, with the rest of the world nowhere.

However, both the British alarmist and the American trade optimist fail to consider all the elements of the position. The national characteristics which have enabled England to lead so long in the industrial race—its inventive genius, its skill, intelligence, and enterprise, its capacity for plodding, and its dogged persistence—are no more likely to fail her in the future than she is likely to lose the advantages of her insular position, or her maritime greatness, or her commanding position as the world's banker. Nothing has happened in the world's industrial developments that might not have been foreseen, apart from the natural surprises of the greater inventive achievements, which have been mainly to the credit and advantage of Great Britain. What has occurred in America and elsewhere has been indicative of the general progress of the human race and the advancement of nations rather than of any deterioration in British skill, enterprise, or resources. While the great mechanical inventions which were either originated or received their most active support in England were not as yet adopted or but slightly utilised in other countries, there could be no disputing of British industrial supremacy, no check to her commercial prosperity; but it was not in the nature of things that the use of labour-saving contrivances could for long be monopolised by England or the few other nations that competed with her. These things had to be spread over the world, and neither their use nor their manufacture could remain a matter of restriction; and that the United States, with its immense population, its indomitable energy, its hunger for wealth, its splendid capacity for work, and its unequalled and exhaustless mineral resources, should gradually push itself into the position of England's chief industrial competitor, was as natural as that a child should grow to be a man, or that one generation of industrial kings should be succeeded by another and more active generation.

America stands where it does to-day in the world of industry as the result of a natural growth rather than because of the possession of superior ability. Energy has accomplished more for America than genius has; and the desire to grow rich quickly has had more to do with bringing that energy into play than anything else, as it has also been a principal factor in the lowering of the tone of public and municipal life in that great country. This energy rides roughshod over all obstacles, is often unscrupulous, and nearly always intensely selfish; but, as the Americans say, it 'gets there,' and that is what they are aiming at.

In our own country we do not rush things at this break-neck pace; there is a little more repose in our national character. Therefore we are occasionally outdistanced by this young and fear-

less competitor, so strong in his pride of youth and dollars, so boastful of his achievements, so determined to forge ahead. Still, we also 'get there' sometimes; and, given a fair field—without hostile protective tariffs to battle with at every stage—and no favour, even America, with all its magnificent resources and energy, would yet be some time before it caught up with us at all points of the race. There is no reason, however, why America should not do her utmost to oust us not only from her own markets, where we have so long and honourably and profitably been pre-eminent, but in all other markets where by superiority of any kind, or by cheapness, she can establish herself. It is for the advantage of the nations that it should be so.

Meanwhile, it may be asked, what becomes of Great Britain's industrial supremacy? If it has to be upheld it will not be by jealousy of American effort or by fear of American skill, but by a firm reliance on native intelligence, a better scientific training for those destined for industrial pursuits, a lessening of the strain betwixt the contending interests of capital and labour, and a fuller realisation of the altered conditions of competition which American industrial progress has brought about.

We now come to consider by what special skill, methods, or enterprise America has accomplished the great things that direct such close attention to her industrial development in these days. Do these achievements portend the industrial capitulation of the nations of Europe and the reduction of British industries to a position of second rank? Not at all. Germany, Russia, Belgium, France, Italy, have all made wonderful progress in manufactures of every kind while the United States has been building up her industrial house, and can to a much greater extent than formerly supply their own wants.

No other country has enjoyed such a clear course for industrial expansion as America. Most of the obstacles that have beset the path of trade development in England have not had to be reckoned with by our transatlantic cousins. England has seldom achieved an important progressive step in that mechanical expansion which made her the first of industrial nations without having had to contend with violent opposition. She, more than any other country, has had to fight the battles of industrial liberty. The manufacture of textiles prior to the inventions of Arkwright, Crompton, Kay, and Hargreaves was a household industry carried on in conjunction with agriculture; and as each labour-saving invention was introduced it was fiercely opposed by the working-classes, and was frequently the cause of riot and bloodshed. The same attitude, though in a less violent degree, prevails to this day against the adoption of improved tools. English inventors and English employers have all along had bitter opposition to battle with, while in America there has been

comparatively little of this kind of conflict to retard the enlargement of the sphere of the machine. Furthermore, there have been fewer of those disorganising influences which disputes between capital and labour have engendered in older countries; so that the Americans have mainly had to concern themselves with the practical adoption of the mechanical inventions of the Old World, their improvement, and their successful operation under a system of protection that has to a great extent shut other nations out from competition in the American market.

Whether the American people at large have benefited from these conditions is open to doubt; and still more doubtful is it whether under any circumstances the American manufacturer can have such a clear run in the future. Labour has in recent years begun to organise itself in the States, and the course of the employer is threatened with obstacles that seldom presented themselves twenty years ago. Strikes are now numerous in America, and they attain proportions and involve dangers that can hardly be realised in England.

What with monopoly—in the form of gigantic trusts and combinations, crushing the life out of smaller enterprises, and generally increasing the prices of products—and the aggressive stand which the various labour unions are taking to obtain for the workman a fuller share of the profits of his work, American industry has breakers ahead that may cause serious trouble. The position of the great combinations is so strong, however—they are so rich and powerful—that it is not a slight shock that can disturb them. The great strike at the Homestead Works, Pittsburg, a few years ago, for the time seemed as if it would rend a famous industrial organisation; yet the difficulty was patched up, and last year this same enterprise earned over four million pounds profit for its proprietors. In Chicago, for several months past, the labour troubles have been of a serious kind, many thousands of workmen being on strike most of the time in obedience to the orders of their unions, and tactics have been resorted to on the part of the strikers that recall in some of their features the terrible events of the Sheffield strikes in which the notorious Broadhead cut such a fiendish figure.

These are the shadows that now play around the otherwise sunny path of the American industrial captains, and they grow deeper as the months go by. Should a time of quick panic arrive, a storm might burst that it would not be easy to allay. Protection is the father of monopoly, and monopoly is the parent of greed; and whether the governing powers ultimately prove strong enough to curb the further growth of this evil, or whether it will be allowed to fatten itself until giant labour has to rise against it and cripple it, remains to be seen.

America may be trusted, however, to deal with

a crisis when it arises. Public spirit and patriotism are important factors in the settlement of difficulties of all kinds in the States; and when sacrifices are necessary they can be made. Therefore, in spite of the multiplication of trade obstacles by which the country is threatened and already suffers from to some extent, there need be no apprehension of any serious break in the general industrial prosperity. The people are adaptable.

It is generally supposed that the Americans are much better equipped with labour-saving appliances, especially in the larger steel and iron works, than their English rivals; and there is some truth in this. Not that Englishmen have not the command of the same kinds of appliances, not that they do not use them, but that the Americans utilise them to a much larger degree. Whatsoever machinery can perform to aid manual labour or take the place of it, that it is set to do in America, and as many men are set to work on any particular job as that job can possibly accommodate; hence they arrive at two important results—cheapness of production and rapidity of operation. The story goes that an American manufacturer of steam specialities, visiting an English maker of the same class of goods, pointed to a certain article and asked, 'What is your price on this thing?' 'About nineteen dollars in your money,' replied the Englishman. 'What does it cost you?' 'I'll deliver at your doors all you want at seven dollars apiece,' said the American. 'How in the world do you do it?' inquired the Englishman. 'Well, I'll illustrate,' answered the American. 'You see that man across the street painting a sign. He's on a ladder—isn't he?—and there's another man on the side-walk holding the foot of the ladder. 'Yes.' 'Well, in America we have ladders that stand up by themselves—don't need a man to hold 'em. So, you see, in this instance we divide the cost of labour exactly by two. That's how we do it.'

Why did Americans get the contract for the erection of the Atbara Bridge for facilitating the movements of Kitchener's troops in the Soudan? Because an American firm undertook to construct the bridge in seven weeks, while the English contractors required seven months. In the same way the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Philadelphia received an order for engines for our Great Northern Railway for the reason that they could supply them in four months, whereas English houses asked eighteen months. When the Glasgow Corporation accepted an American bid for installing electricity on the street-car lines of that city, and the bid of other American firms for the steel work of the electric-power station, and for the engines, it was not because native work would not have been preferred, but simply for reasons of cheapness and quickness, as in the other cases. Similar reasons led to the employment almost exclusively of American firms and material in the

equipment of London's latest underground electrical railway, involving an outlay of upwards of three million pounds.

It is mainly by the effective utilisation of their many labour-saving devices that the Americans get in ahead of us. The displacements of labour incident to their introduction in English operations do not arise, inasmuch as the industries using them are often of recent enough organisation to admit of their starting with such an equipment. It is in this direction more than any other that British workers have to move if they are to have equal chances with the Americans. The Pittsburg firm that engaged to supply the steel work of the electric-power station at Glasgow bid seventy thousand pounds below the lowest British tender, notwithstanding the heavy handicap of ocean transportation. The Americans likewise underbid us in rails and galvanised wires for the Cape, in rails and cannon for the Russians, and in other instances too numerous to mention. In May of this year an American ship carried to Russia a cargo of 8640 tons of steel rails, invoiced at twenty-one dollars a ton. Lord Cromer, in his recent report of the financial situation in Egypt, remarks upon the use of American locomotives in the Soudan, and exactly explains the position as between British and American makers. The order for American locomotives and wagons was simply due to the fact, he writes, 'that the American firms, while not in a position to tender more favourable terms than others on our designs, almost invariably offered engines or wagons on standards of their own at lower prices and in less time.'

American invention is at the present moment more active than that of any other country in the working out of contrivances for dispensing with hand-labour, and unless England keeps pace with this active development she cannot expect to retain her old position in the world's markets. At the present time there is trouble in Chicago and other cities of the States in consequence of the introduction of an automatic facing tool used in the marble and stone yards, and another tool that can take the place of the mallet and chisel in fine work. The operator grasps a handpiece and presses the tool to the face of the stone; air is admitted to the plunger in response to the pressure, and twenty thousand blows a minute can be struck, while a man cannot swing a heavy hammer continuously more than thirty times a minute. A painting machine that is now widely used was invented by Mr Frank D. Millet when at work on the Chicago Exposition buildings. Finding it impossible to get the painting work done in time by the ordinary process, he devised a machine that was capable of covering with paint thirty-one thousand five hundred square feet per day. There was the usual fight with the unions before he was permitted to bring the machine into operation, but he eventually conquered, and one

man and a machine can now do the work that it previously took many men to do. By this new tool a man can paint a coal-car in fifteen minutes.

In the iron and steel trades labour-saving contrivances are of wonderful efficiency in America. The iron ore mined at Lake Superior is carried to the ore docks and dumped into the holds of steamers at a cost of only a few cents a ton. A great deal of it is quarried by steam-shovels and emptied directly into the cars, no human muscle being exerted from the time the shovel scrapes the ore from its native bed until the cargo reaches the lower lake-ports, whence it is sent to the smelters. A new shovel has just been introduced for handling the ore in the unloading, capable of transferring 1500 tons per day, with the employment of only three men.

It is the same in every branch of industry. The labour-saving inventor is pushing ahead 'all the time.' In the great drainage-canal recently completed in Chicago at a cost of over seven million pounds, fifty-six air-compressors were used to take out twelve million cubic yards of solid rock. Had the Panama Canal promoters had the appliances and engineering skill which were brought into use on the Chicago drainage-canal, the great waterway that was the dream and the downfall of De Lesseps could have been easily constructed with the money he had at command.

Every new development is met with the old stock-argument—the destruction of labour; but this plea is not pressed so aggressively as in former times. The introduction of a labour-saving device must necessarily have the effect of depriving certain men of accustomed employment, and for the time these men suffer a hardship. It does not take long, however, to readjust this temporary dislocation. Instead of many men at low wages, a few men at higher wages and with shorter hours find employment; and soon the cheapening of the article, consequent on the improved method, induces an increased demand and consumption, and in time a greater number of men than ever are employed. The general recognition of this fact in America tends considerably to the avoidance of strikes against machinery, which are simply strikes against human progress.

It is a marvellous story, this, of the development of industry in the United States. Modest enough were its beginnings; but when once the pioneers of American industry came to realise the wide range of the country's possibilities and the strength of its natural position, all their energy was devoted to the task of some day getting even with England in the race for industrial superiority. That it has done this in certain directions already cannot be disputed. That it will extend this advantage is probable; but that Great Britain will cease to be industrially great, or that the manufactures of any other nation

will surpass ours in our own special lines is no more to be expected than our general degeneracy as a race.

Apart from the mere question of industrial activity, energy, and ability, the splendid mineral resources of America are a natural advantage that for centuries to come will be a prominent factor in the sum of her manufacturing greatness. Until last year the United Kingdom led the United States in coal production. In 1870 our coal product was 123,682,935 tons as against an output of 36,806,560 in the States. In 1899 the United States produced 244,000,000 tons, and the United Kingdom 234,000,000 tons. Backed up by its mighty coal resources, America is building up a great industrial record, and in manufactures of every description expansion is being rushed at a rapid rate. It is this abundance of cheap coal that has enabled America to show such a marvellous increase in the production, manufacture, and exportation of metals. In 1889 manufactures of metals formed less than 20 per cent. of the total exportation of manufactures, while to-day they amount to about 45 per cent. The increase in this branch of exports in the decade 1889-98 was 339 per cent., while the increase in the exportation of all manufactures during that period was but 110 per cent., and of manufactures other than those of metal only 55 per cent.

The South, not long ago an exclusively agricultural region, is fast becoming the home of the cotton manufacture as well as of cotton culture, and in all the lower grades of goods has for some years not only been cutting under the English fabric-maker, but has been disputing leadership with its own countrymen in New England. In

fact, many Northern manufacturers have migrated South during the last five years, and machinery is pouring into the old slave states at a surprising rate. In the twelve Southern states where the cotton manufacture has been more or less established there were in August 1898 a total of 3,670,290 spindles, and since that period, up to the 1st of April 1900, additional enterprises have been projected in the South by which an increase of at least 35 per cent. is assured.

Still, great a country as the United States is, and rapid as is its industrial growth, there is one point of supremacy that Great Britain will possibly not have to relinquish for some time to come, and that is its capacity for excelling in the higher qualities of its manufactured products. In the magnitude of its operations, in the construction of certain articles made from iron and steel, and for its many mechanical improvements America stands high in the world's regard, and justly so. Its achievements have been on a marvellous scale. In the finer textile work, however, and in most of those special processes where quality and durability of product count rather than bulk, the Old World still surpasses the New, and will doubtless continue to do so a few years longer. When America has outlived protection and brought her gigantic trust undertakings into line with the demands of international fairness and the best interests of her own people, it may be that she will be able to assume the position of the leading industrial nation; but, it must be conceded, she has much to accomplish before this supreme point can be reached—many rough places to make smooth, many conquests over internal difficulties to win, many prejudices to overcome.

THE SILVER LOTAH.

IN FOUR PARTS.—PART IV.



THE village of Yusufghât showed itself to Colonel Matthias in full daylight against the sky as he climbed—the masterless horse behind him—out of the last intervening valley. The men had scattered to their maize-growing and goat-tending on the lower slopes of the mountains, and only the women and babies huddled to stare at the stranger. Matthias dismounted, searching for words in which to frame an inquiry, and then paused as he saw the children scamper at the outskirts of the crowd.

There, advancing towards him, were two men of imposing carriage and feature, in whose mountaineer's attire, with its sheepskin-coat and bristling girdle, Matthias recognised the characteristic dress of the wild tribes living beyond the Indian frontier. That they were strange even to the people of the border village Matthias

learnt from the way the crowd scattered and finally melted away altogether at their glance. The new-comers advanced and saluted the Colonel, searching him with their keen eyes, and taking note, as he saw, of his mount, his bearing, and his pale and travel-stained face. The riderless horse behind him came in for a share of the scrutiny, and one of them, after examining its rowelled sides and inspecting the empty saddle, slipped his hand through the bridle and took possession.

'The servants of the thing with many eyes salute the messenger,' said one of the men. 'What news of the Khan's daughter? Alan sahib we thought to see, but he is not here: Nathoo we feared to meet; but—he looked at the horse—'perhaps he will be feared no more. What news?'

'Alan Black is dead,' said Matthias. 'Nathoo is dead. There is no one left; and the woman

of whom you speak sends the silver lotah to you, and renders homage to her kinsman, Uzr Khan.'

The two men uttered a simultaneous exclamation, and their faces gleamed; it was evident that the message, though it surprised them, was a piece of welcome news. They turned to each other with sparkling eyes, and with a rapid flow of language in a dialect of which the Colonel could only understand a word here and there. He gathered that they were profoundly astonished and relieved by the turn affairs had taken.

'The lotah protects its own,' said the other man. 'Did not Uzr Khan say so, brother? He has ruled wisely and well, and he has his reward: there will be no more talk of fools and knaves to sit in the place of his fathers, to beget fools and knaves who could hold his son's heritage. And now, sahib, we would hear your news.'

'Peace!' said the first speaker. 'The sahib has rendered a great service, and he is weary from his work. Let him rest first, until he chooses to speak with us.'

Matthias, however, was anxious to return to Phulgarh. The village promised poor hospitality, and the thought of Mrs Black and her dead son was still uppermost in his mind. He told his story briefly, and begged for a pony on which to cover the first stage of the return journey. But first he surrendered the silver lotah.

The guardians of the lotah took it reverently, and Matthias noticed that they shut it inside a richly-chased silver box, into which it fitted with an exactness that suggested it had found its long-denied home. One of the men looked up as he snapped the lid upon it, and caught the expression in Matthias's eyes.

'Yes, it is a strange thing, a great mystery, sahib,' he said—'so profound a mystery that, after a little, men forget and disbelieve the power it holds within it. But the power exists; to be used only, as we think, for the safety of the lotah, and the good of our Khan and his subjects.'

'And, incidentally, for the preservation of less interesting people,' mused the Colonel, looking back to the dangers of the night. Then aloud: 'Ay, it is, as you say, a great mystery. I do not understand it, and no doubt I too shall disbelieve, when time has dulled the edge of my memory. Meantime'—he raised his hand to his forehead—'I salute the silver lotah, and I wish its future owner all honour and prosperity.'

It was a very jaded and weary man who climbed down from his horse, a big brown Waler, and staggered across the compound of Matthias's little bungalow and up the veranda steps, in search of bath and dinner. The Colonel could hardly have told how his return journey had gone. It

was a confused memory to him of lonely bridle-paths, and precipices that hid things not well to be seen, and naked, time-scarred mountains. It seemed to him as if he had been riding all his life, fleeing from a pre-existence of murders and ambushes and bewildering impossibilities.

He marched stiffly into the dining-room, gathering breath for a shout to his bearer. The little home looked dim and restful after his late field of action. Then he stopped, for an unfamiliar object occupied the table, and invited his attention by the signal of a scrap of letter-paper:

'To the Colonel sahib. From the woman who does not forget.'

It was a small open casket, and the sight of it made Matthias oblivious, for a second, to his tired limbs and his recent experiences. The box was crammed to overflowing with a hotch-potch of bangles, gold chains, and ear-rings, packed amongst a confusion of unset precious stones. It looked as if Mrs Black had ransacked her jewel-coffer, and huddled its contents pell-mell into the little box. The mass represented, as Matthias estimated at the first glance, a sum beyond the wildest dream of a thrifty half-pay Colonel.

He was still gaping at the spectacle when a spur clinked on the veranda. He swept the box into a drawer, and turned to face Carington.

'Why, where the dickens have you been?' asked the policeman in familiar English, mopping his forehead. 'There has been a fearful how-d'ye-do at your next-door neighbour's—murder and sudden death, and I don't know all what. All the servants have disappeared, and I've got my hands full trying to size up the business. Alan Black has been stabbed, and his mother swears her other son, Nathoo, has done it; and so Nathoo is wanted; and then, just when I've arranged everything for following his flight, the old woman dies'—

'What!' said Matthias. 'Is Mrs Black dead too? Heavens, what an overwhelming flood of calamity has swept upon the family!'

'Hey? Oh yes, Mrs Black is dead. She dropped down in a fit this morning after volunteering a long story about Nathoo's jealousy of Alan, and its consequences—meaning the murder. The civil surgeon came round at once, but she never recovered consciousness. Perhaps it was just as well. She seemed quite wild and distraught at the shock of it all, poor soul! And so there we are. . . . Do you know anything about it, Matthias?'

Colonel Matthias took a step towards the table. He pulled open the drawer, and laid the casket upon it. Carington's jaw dropped.

'No, it's not a case of robbery with violence, my dear fellow.' Weary as he was, the Colonel could not help smiling at the policeman's stupefaction. 'Only—I am in a position to enlighten

you very distinctly upon the subject; and when I have told you—and I hope the details need not go to the public ear in their entirety—you will, perhaps, give me your opinion on a matter of conscience. . . . And yet, a gift is a gift.

Therefore, seeing that a very clear expression exists upon this paper, I think perhaps I may assume that I have a moral right at least to these jewels for the part that I have taken in the fortunes of The Silver Lotah.'

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.



THE British Association for the Advancement of Science has held its meeting at Bradford this year. Since this valuable association met for the first time in 1831, the world has seen many changes; and, owing

to the multiplication of societies, the publication of technical journals, and the attention paid to scientific matters in our schools and colleges, the annual meetings of the British Association do not assume that importance which they once had. Still, we look to this meeting as a finger-post on the road to knowledge, which records the progress which has been made during the past year; and the papers read always include much that is worthy of careful perusal. The Presidential Address, which dealt with the 'cell' as the ultimate particle of all animal and vegetable tissues, was full of interest; but perhaps the subject which will most attract public attention just now is that of wireless telegraphy, which was so ably treated by Sir William Preece. Not only did this expert electrician foreshadow brilliant possibilities for wireless telegraphy, but he detailed experiments showing that actual speech by means of the telephone was possible from point to point without the aid of communicating wires.

THE WAR BETWIXT MAN AND BEAST.

From India there comes once more the official figures relating to the 'casualties' caused in the constant war which prevails there between man and beast. We are happily situated in this country in being able to look back upon such a struggle as a thing of the past; but in our Eastern dependency destructive animals still claim their annual tribute of human blood. In the past year more than 128,000 animals were killed, and rewards claimed for their slaughter; and during the same period 25,166 men, women, and children met their death through tooth, claw, and the poison of snakes. To this terrible tale of human suffering must be added nearly 100,000 domestic animals which were killed by the same agencies. We thus see that the loss of life is about equal on both sides. It is interesting to see how the deaths are apportioned among the wild beasts. First comes the terrible man-eating tiger, which is responsible for 927 victims; the wolves come next with a total of 462; while the leopard claims

394. Under the heading 'other wild beasts' are computed 1482 human deaths. The rest of the grand total, no fewer than 21,900 items of this terrible death-list, are set down to snake-bite. It is almost futile to expect any great reduction in the annual loss of life from poisonous snakes, for the natives will never kill one of these creatures if they can avoid doing so.

A MARVELLOUS VOYAGE.

'I do not hesitate to call it the most extraordinary book—in its way—ever published, and the adventure itself by far the most courageous, sustained, and successful enterprise of the kind ever undertaken by mortal man.' Thus writes Sir Edwin Arnold of Captain Slocum's recent book entitled *Sailing Alone around the World*, recounting how, in a boat of his own building, he sailed alone boldly out into the broad Atlantic upon a voyage of forty-six thousand miles. The voyage lasted three years and two months; and when the voyager returned to Boston, from whence he sailed, he had gained a pound in weight, and felt ten years younger than he did when he started from home three years before. His adventures were various, and he met sometimes with awfully stormy seas; but he was an accomplished sailor, and weathered all difficulties. The story is a wonderful record of human pluck, endurance, and perseverance, and should find millions of readers. The book is published by Messrs Sampson, Low, Marston, & Co.

THE PROTECTION OF INSECTIVOROUS BIRDS.

The Society for the Protection of Birds, 3 Hanover Square, London, is doing useful work in calling attention to the need of fresh legislation to deal with the protection of insect-eating birds in India. Sir Charles Lawson some months ago contributed an article to the *Madras Mail*, in which he showed how much injury is caused in that country by the wholesale destruction of birds for the sake of their plumage. A preventive law is already in force in India, but it is much too limited in its scope, and is in many districts evaded. We learn from the article referred to that 'it is not only grain, such as rice, wheat, millet, &c., that is devoured in enormous quantities by insects, but that huge crops of other commercial products, such as cotton, oil-seeds, and the like, are compelled to pay heavy toll to those pests.' Upon good authority it is stated that in parts of India one-fourth of the cotton crop is sometimes lost

from the ravages of one kind of insect. This terrible loss is in great measure due to the shooting and netting of the birds, so that the skins may be imported to meet the vagaries of fashion in so-called civilised countries.

AN INCANDESCENT OIL-LIGHT.

The Kitson system of using an incandescent mantle in conjunction with vaporised mineral oil, although not familiar in this country, is much used in America; and, from the lamps which we have recently seen in action in London, we are led to think well of it, more especially for situations in which a high-power illuminant is required. The apparatus is small and is self-contained. It consists of a steel cylinder which is charged with compressed air by the action of a hand-pump. This cylinder contains a supply of petroleum, which, under pressure of the air, is carried to the lamp by copper tubing no thicker than a telegraph wire. The lamp is fitted with the now familiar Welsbach mantle, and the oil, vaporised at this point by the initial application of a flame, brings it to a glowing white-heat. The lamps are said to be of nearly 1000 candle-power, and to consume only half-a-pint of oil per hour. We understand that the Trinity House authorities have the system under consideration for use in lighthouses and lightships, an employment for which it seems eminently fitted. The system is also adapted for street-lighting, for open spaces, and for photographic purposes.

ARCTIC EXPLORATION.

This is an age of record-beating. A man no sooner executes a feat which no one else has achieved than some one else springs up and robs him of his laurels. Only the other day every one was talking about the wonderful expedition of Nansen, who succeeded in reaching a higher latitude in his good ship *The Fram* than any previous voyager had attained. He has now been distanced, by some nineteen nautical miles, by the Duke of Abruzzi, the nephew of the lately assassinated King Humbert of Italy. The Duke's expedition started in June last year, and the ship which carried it, the *Stella Polare*, was in the polar ice for eleven long months. The usual hardships were endured, the men having to kill their dogs for food. At one time the ship was pushed by the ice on to land, and through the leak made the hold was filled with water. It is reported that valuable scientific observations were made, and that forty bears and a walrus fell to the guns of the party.

SUBMARINE WARFARE.

The very old idea of a warship which can operate below the surface of the sea, and can deal death and destruction to craft of the more usual kind, has at last become a practical reality. America and France have both, after careful

trials, accepted this kind of warship as an addition to their navies; and Britain, perforce, must follow suit. We, as a nation, are slow to assimilate novelties, and more especially is this the case where Government departments are the arbiters. Sometimes we naturally suffer from thus lagging behind; but on the whole we score, for we have the advantage of profiting by the experience of others. We now learn that a newly-designed submarine boat is under trial by the British Admiralty, and that so far the experiments made have been most satisfactory. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, this boat can be steered beneath the heaviest man-of-war, and can attach a submarine mine to an enemy's ship and get clear away before the explosion occurs. The new boat is fitted with tubes for discharging torpedoes, and is armed with quick-firing and machine guns. It will float on the surface or beneath it as may be required, and is in every respect as efficient as its French and American rivals. The low cost of one of these terrible engines of naval warfare, as compared with a battle-ship, is not the least of its recommendations.

THE STEEL AGE.

One of the most important factors in the advance of the mechanical arts which has distinguished the close of the nineteenth century is the employment of steel in place of other constructive materials. Steel can now be made of many kinds; and it is owing to this command over the nature of the metal to be compounded that so many new applications can be found for it. Even railway-cars and boats are now made of thin steel moulded into shape by hydraulic pressure. In small things also we find that steel is usurping the place of both iron and wood. Since it was found out that by an annealing process steel could be made malleable, hundreds of small fittings have been made of the metal. As a case in point we may take the domestic umbrella, the evolution of which from the clumsy 'gamp' of our forefathers would form an interesting chapter. In its most recent form the frame is made entirely of steel; and Messrs Samuel Fox & Co. not only make the frame of a special kind of steel which will bend and not break, but the stick itself is made of a metal tube which will neither bend nor break. This form of construction conduces both to strength and long life, while, at the same time, it has a compact and neat appearance.

VOTING BY MACHINERY.

The occurrence of a General Election attracts attention to an invention patented by Mr W. H. Howe, which is now exhibited in London. This is a machine which its contriver claims to fulfil all, and more than all, the provisions and intentions of the Ballot Act, in enabling a voter to record his vote without any chance of blunder

and in absolute secrecy. Each voter passes through a turnstile and finds himself in a small chamber, where facing him is a row of handles above each of which is the name of a candidate. He pulls the handle of the man he wishes to vote for, an action which at once locks all the other handles; and as he passes out of another turnstile, the handle he has moved returns to its place, and his vote is printed upon a travelling roll of paper. The votes are printed in consecutive numbers, so that the last one recorded for each candidate gives the total of his poll, and thus no counting is necessary. The need of such a machine is evidenced by the fact that in every General Election in this country, by one blunder or another, about twenty thousand votes are rendered invalid. It is well known, too, that mistakes owing to faulty counting are by no means uncommon.

ART IN THE THEATRES.

It used to be a common idea that scene-painting is synonymous with daubing. This, of course, is all nonsense, for scene-painting as we know it now in the best theatres is a fine art requiring much study before proficiency is attained. Among those who served an apprenticeship at this kind of work may be mentioned Stanfield and David Roberts, who afterwards rose to great eminence as landscape painters. A gentleman who seems to be following in their footsteps is Mr A. J. Black, who has been commissioned to provide act-drops for several of the handsome suburban theatres which have sprung up round London. These, we learn from the *Magazine of Art*, in which the designs for these act-drops are reproduced, are not painted in distemper, after the manner of the theatrical scenery generally; they are in oil-colours, a medium which ensures a long life. Some of these paintings, which will well bear examination with a powerful opera-glass, measure as much as thirty feet across; but they naturally vary in size with the dimensions of the proscenium which each is designed to fill.

IN MEMORIAM.

The house where a famous man has lived is always an object of interest, and it has long been the custom in London and various provincial towns to embellish such a building with a modest tablet setting forth the name of the revered one, and the date when he occupied the premises. In this way the houses occupied by Dickens, Thackeray, Keats, Dryden, Pope, and many other writers are placarded for the benefit of passers-by. The tablet in general consists of a medallion without any pretension to artistic excellence; but an exception has lately been made in the case of the house once occupied by England's great landscape artist, Turner, which stands in Cheyne Row, Chelsea. The tablet in this instance has been designed in metal by Mr Walter Crane, and the

work has been carried out with his usual decorative skill. It bears the presentment of a painter's palette and brushes, together with the following inscription: 'Joseph Mallard William Turner, landscape painter, lived and worked in this house. B. 1775. D. 1851.'

ACTION OF AIR ON PLANTS.

A German investigator has made a series of experiments in order to ascertain the action of dry and moist air on plants, and he has published the results of his researches. He finds that germinating plants develop with greater rapidity in air saturated with moisture than they will in dry air or in air in its normal condition, but that the stem is longer and has a smaller diameter, while the number of leaves shows an increase, seemingly at the expense of the rootlets, which are greatly diminished. When plants are exposed to dry air, on the other hand, the development of the stem and leaves is diminished and the stems increase in girth. Under these latter conditions the foliage surface decreases and the number of rootlets are augmented.

IDENTIFICATION OF CRIMINALS.

The Bertillon system of criminal investigation has had a signal triumph in the case of Salson, the would-be assassin of the Shah, whose identity was at once established by its aid. Briefly put, this method of investigation depends upon recording certain measurements of the head and body, together with the colour of the hair and eyes, and imprints of the finger-tips. The system has in a modified way been adopted in this country, and a committee appointed by the Home Secretary is now considering how far it may be further extended. In France, where a man is presumed to be guilty immediately the police lay their hands upon him, the physical examination is conducted without demur; but in Britain, where we hold a man to be innocent until his guilt be proved, no such preliminary step is allowable. Our own method is fairer to the suspected individual, while that in vogue in France is certainly more conducive to the public safety.

THE BOILING-POINT OF WATER.

Most persons are apt to regard the boiling-point of the domestic saucepan as a fixed quantity, unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians; but the cooks of a certain town in New Mexico have discovered that, in consequence of its great altitude above the sea, water boils there at 202 degrees Fahrenheit instead of the normal 212 degrees Fahrenheit. This means that all the cooking calculations depending upon the heat of water have to be revised. Everything, from a breakfast-egg to a silver side of beef, takes longer to cook than it does lower down in the atmosphere. Another thing which militates against the calculations of the ordinary cook of this same town

is, that the air is so dry that vegetables are deprived of half their natural moisture, and must be left a long time in water to recover themselves before being cooked. In connection with this matter of the boiling-point, we might observe that if our cooks at home could only realise the fact that it is impossible to raise an open vessel containing water above boiling-point, they would save much of the gas used in so many houses for fuel.

LIGHTNING-STROKE.

Professor Henry, of the United States Weather Bureau, has issued a very interesting report upon the subject of thunderstorms and accidents from lightning, although his words refer only to occurrences in America. Misadventure from lightning is increasing rather than diminishing, the year 1899 affording more examples than any previous period. In the twelve months five hundred and sixty-two persons were either killed outright or afterwards died in consequence of injuries brought about by lightning, and no fewer than eight hundred and twenty received injuries more or less severe, from which they ultimately recovered. In detail, some of the cases present curious features. Sometimes the clothing of the persons struck was set on fire and their bodies badly burned, but they recovered. Some of the fatal cases exhibited no sign of hurt, while in others the skin was much discoloured. A number of precautions are recommended to those who would avoid death or injury from lightning. About 11 per cent. of all the deaths recorded were due to taking shelter beneath trees during a storm. Several fatalities also occurred in connection with metal wires used instead of cords for hanging clothes to dry. In some of the American states a great increase is shown in the number of fatalities from lightning, whilst others show a decrease. There seems to be no accounting for this; it is one of the vagaries of lightning.

SEA FISHERIES LEGISLATION.

The committee to which the recent Sea Fisheries Bill was referred have made a special report to the House of Commons recommending further inquiry and investigation before proceeding with the measure. While admitting that there is a serious diminution of the fish-supply, they point out that it would be next to impossible to prohibit the taking of immature fish without stopping trawling altogether; but as it is an established fact that young and undersized fish frequent well-known areas in the North Sea, prevention of fishing in such areas would do much good. Such action, however, could not be secured except by international agreement and under effectual policing. The committee are in favour of international treatment of the subject generally, and especially with regard to the North Sea area already referred to. They also

recommend the adequate equipment of and enlarged powers to the Government department in charge of the matter, so as to promote careful investigation, and to ascertain what has been done in other countries in the matter of scientific research or practical legislation.

THE WANING LIGHT.

THE flowers fade out on moor and woodland,
And stormier waves caress the beach;
The winds are louder in the forests,
And wailing grasses low beseech:
How tender are the later blossoms!
In red and pink they shine, and stand,
A gentle memory of the beauties
That lured us in the summer land!

The martens on the posts are sitting;
They twitter soft their pensive lay;
An instinct guides their every motion,
And soon they wing their devious way.
How, to my heart, the scenes of colour,
The pictured glow on leaf and flower,
Speak of our frail and changing nature,
And of life's fitful fever'd hour!

But as, with gentleness alluring,
Each blossom fades, each leaf is shed,
May I, too, uncomplaining, hasten
To life's swift goal, in mercy led!
The Wise Design that guides the blossom,
The loving thought that tones the tree,
Be spirit-lessons to my spirit,
Be consolation, friend, to thee!

WILLIAM JOSEPH GALLAGHER.

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